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MATTHEW ARNOLD.

It may be affirmed that those American readers of the works of Matthew Arnold, who have diligently followed him from his first to his latest volume, who have most keenly felt the fascination of his style and the limitations of his character, and who have scribbled over the margins of his pages with alternate notes of admiration and interrogation, will specially welcome the new edition of his writings published by the Macmillans. In an extended consideration of his labors much might be said in his praise, which the necessary brevity of this review compels us to omit; and our simple object is to state some reasons which account for the fact that he is not popular, in any large sense of the word, either on this or the other side of the Atlantic.

It is doubtless to be supposed that Mr. Arnold's estimate of our civilization will not be flattering to our national vanity or national pride. A writer who has repeatedly told his own countrymen that their higher classes are "materialized," their middle classes "vulgarized," and their lower classes "brutalized," cannot be expected to proclaim, after a few months' residence in this country, that the conduct, politics, society, science, and literature of the United States come up to the high ideal standards which he is accustomed to apply to other nations as well as to his own.

It may be said that the general characteristic of Mr. Arnold's poetry is moral and intellectual skepticism and despondency; and that the general characteristic of his criticism is moral and intellectual superciliousness. When he writes in verse from his inner self, from his "heart of heart," he moans; when he writes in prose he is prone to assume the air of "a superior being," condescending even to those he graciously applauds. When a man, in the expressive phrase of Dickens's Mr. Wegg, "drops into

poetry," it is supposed that some kindling sentiment prompts him to choose verse as the most appropriate vehicle for his outburst of thought and emotion. In Mr. Arnold's case this process is reversed. When he is out of spirits he sings; when he feels himself a being superior to his contemporaries, he criticises. In his mood of dejection, he embodies his feeling in a stanza like this, taken from his poem on "The Grand Chartreuse":

"Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride;
I come to shed them at their side."

Also, when in a milder mood, but one which is still haunted by specters of a melancholy which seems inborn, and to lie at the very root of his nature, he declares:

"Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harassed to attain
Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
And luminous view to gain."

It may be said that Mr. Arnold's sorrowful view of life in his poems is characteristic of many great poets. Byron, for example, is fiercely misanthropic in matters of human concern, where Mr. Arnold is merely gently despondent and despairing. But Byron's original, not to say aboriginal, energy of nature, is so great that, while his thoughts tend to depress the soul, his energy stimulates it. We get from his poems few principles on which a rational human being would think of basing his conduct; but he inspires, impels, inflames hundreds of thousands of readers who have no sympathy with his misanthropy. Mr. Arnold goes deeper, perhaps, than Byron into the causes which induce many thinkers to be dejected in surveying the phenomena of human life, but he lacks Byron's immense vigor. A comparative feebleness of constitution prevents him from giving to his thoughts the great element of Power. This is said without questioning the exquisiteness of much of his poetry, and the delight it communicates to many cultivated minds; but its effectiveness on ordinary readers is injured by the general melancholy of its tone, and by its lack of impassioned imagination.

One cannot speak of Matthew Arnold without thinking of his father, whose biography by the late Dean Stanley made at the period when it was published so deep an impression. It stimulated the reader to carry liberal and generous ideas into practical work for the good of mankind. The father had the great quality of soul. Everybody felt that he announced no principle for which he would not willingly have died. In fact, he was recognized as a spiritual force; and he communicated spiritual life because he was himself all alive. It can hardly be doubted that the scholarship of the son is far richer and larger than that of the father; that in theology he has advanced to conclusions from which the father would have recoiled; that he has successfully occupied regions of literature which the father barely entered; and that even in matters of education, especially the education of the middle classes, the son is far beyond the father in clear ideas and methods of culture; yet the son, with all his intelligence and acquired knowledge, has not the father's magical gift. He can inform, but he cannot inspire and invigorate. The soul is wanting. That wonderful passage of experience and intelligence into will, by which high reason, or even ordinary good sense, impels reasonable minds to instant action, is lacking in the most radical of Matthew Arnold's teachings and preachings. We agree or disagree with him, as we read; but, if we agree, we receive from him no impulse to conform our conduct to his ideas. It would be difficult to detect among those who most admire his writings a single individual who has been led to act nobly by any inspiration derived directly from his numerous books. And yet most of these books are specially marked by the emphasis laid on righteousness, and on self-renunciation as the fruit of righteousness.

The explanation of this fact is not far to seek. The expansion of his intelligence has been purchased at the expense of weakening his will. It cannot be said that he is destitute of the peculiarities and infirmities of individuality, however much he may be lacking in its powers; for no modern writer of equal reputation and genius is so full of idiosyncrasies and tastes and distastes, especially the latter. But the heart of his being is not thoroughly sound and strong. Something languid, discontented, dissatisfied; something which makes the impression of a certain subtle, feline resentment at the non-

acknowledgment of his own claims to eminence, is observable in the inmost recesses of his moral nature. A compassionate contempt for other minds appears to be a necessary condition of any self-satisfaction he may find in contemplating his own. This ungracious quality too often takes the form of a condescension which exasperates alike those who agree and those who disagree with him in matters of literary, political, and theological discussion. Now the Almighty may very properly condescend to the human beings he has created; but he is the only being who has a right to condescend,—except, it seems, Mr. Matthew Arnold; and the latter uses the privilege at times in a fashion which makes us regret that the exception was made in his favor. It may be affirmed that you may do all in your power to injure a fellow creature, even if you go to the extent of robbing, torturing, and enslaving him. He may sullenly bear these injuries; but beware of condescending to him! No man can descend so low without acutely feeling this last insult to what is immortal in him, his personality.

It is difficult to illustrate Mr. Arnold's superb superciliousness except by examples drawn from that department of life where superciliousness reigns supreme, namely, fashionable society. Thus it is reported that two high-bred women, one from New York, the other from Boston, happened to meet in what is ironically called a "social" circle. Both were rich and accomplished, and both claimed to have ancestors. Boston, in the course of a little conversation between the two, alluded, in the most seemingly unpretentious way, to the trivial circumstance that her ancestors came over in the Mayflower. "Ah!" replied New York, with a little lift of her eyebrows expressive of innocent surprise, "I did not know before that the Mayflower brought over any steerage passengers." The retort certainly was not delicate; but still in what Bacon calls the "great ship of Time," no one is so careful to distinguish between cabin and steerage passengers as Mr. Arnold. His exacting taste demands the "culture" of the few highly educated people who occupy the state-rooms, though genius and saintliness may be among the motley assemblage in the steerage. The slightest taint of vulgarity repels him, as though it were an inexpiable sin. All his readers must remember his mischievous delight in quoting, in essay after essay, a verse of a hymn, which he eventually robs of

the capital letter beginning each line, and which he declares expresses the average piety of a Protestant devotee of the middle class: "My Jesus to know, and feel his blood flow, 'tis life everlasting, 'tis Heaven below."

Now, that such doggerel as this is exceptional in all orthodox congregational hymn books, he must know very well; but it serves his turn in his effort to show the vulgarity which steals into the worship of dissenting Christians. He is never tired of thrusting it into their faces as a proof that they cannot adore their Redeemer without shocking every principle of good taste, and of ironically recommending to them a small dose of "literature" to sweeten and refine the bald announcement of their "dogma." If uneducated or imperfectly educated Protestant saints ever swear, it must be when they read such polite exhortations for them to sing and pray in Oxford English; and they might be justified in swearing by assuming that, considering the provocation, profanity, in some emergencies, becomes a religious exercise.

No injustice is done to Mr. Arnold in saying that condescension in the form of superciliousness more or less infects his ablest writings. He is very careful to abstain from every kind of that passionate invective, of that righteous wrath, in which vehement minds are apt to indulge when their souls are excited by the contemplation of some great wrong; there is hardly a trace in his works of the noble rage so dominant in Milton, Chatham, or Burke; but, on the other hand, there is no recent English writer who excels or even equals him in the exquisitely polished poison with which he deliberately tips the light and shining arrows of his sarcasm. The wounds he inflicts may seem to be a mere scratch on the surface; but they fester; they eat into the flesh, which they hardly seem to touch; and the dull and prolonged pain they cause is as hard to bear as the sting of a scorpion or the bite of a centipede. It is said that curates of the Church of England have a not unnatural desire to become Bishops; but what curates would not rather prefer to remain curates, than to occupy the positions of the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester, after they had been subjected to Matthew Arnold's ironical compliments, in "Literature and Dogma." These dignitaries of the church had, in convocation, declared their intention "to do something for the honor of Our Lord's

Godhead," and to mark their sense of that "infinite separation for time and eternity which is involved in rejecting the Godhead of the Eternal Son."

Throughout the volume, Arnold seizes every opportunity to bring in that unfortunate phrase, "to do something," until the poor Bishops are practically stretched on the rack of an intellectual inquisition, which is as cruel as the old Spanish model of bodily torment. How studiously polite, how affectedly urbane, how inexpressibly bland, is the manner of the critic as he sees his victims writhe under the application of his gilded thumb-screws. The first turn and twist of the engines of torture might not inflict much pain; but it is their continual repetition which wounds. The poor creatures, when he makes a point against their special dogma, are, as it were, compassionately urged "to do something" for "the godhead of the Eternal Son." Their pious anxiety to begin a work which, it would appear, they have long neglected, and their confidence in their power "to do something" when their sacerdotal functions are properly exercised, are pressed home on the Bishops with a witty relentlessness that borders on malice; while at the same time the critic is employed in an attempt to undermine their whole system of theology, and does all he can to make them ridiculous in the eyes of the world. It is hardly possible to inflict acute pain in a more seemingly gentle way. And then, throughout the discussion, the reader who reads between the lines is aware that substantial injustice is done to the Bishops. He may take pleasure in seeing how a master in the rhetorical art can, to all appearance, be victorious over able adversaries by insisting on holding them to an unlucky phrase, which has slipped from them in an unguarded moment; but the victory is still not one of reason, but of wit. At least, it has none of the "sweet reasonableness" which it is the object of the book to enforce.

A critic who does not hesitate to satirize men high in the Established Church, as well as persons low in dissenting congregations, can hardly be expected to deal genially with contemporary men of letters. When he is "down among the dead men," he is sufficiently complimentary; but how few living authors are indebted to him for a friendly word! His essays "On Translating Homer" provoked combats nearly as fierce as those the great epic poet celebrates. He contrived to excite the enmity of living translators of Homer by his exasperating super-

ciliousness in summing up their demerits. Homer, says Mr. Arnold, has four distinctive qualities, which his translator should keep constantly in mind, or he will fail in rendering him adequately. Homer is, first, eminently rapid; secondly, he is eminently plain and direct, both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it; thirdly, he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his matter and ideas; and, finally, he is eminently noble.

From Chapman to Wright every translator is found to be deficient in one or more of these inexorable conditions. Living translators of Homer were specially angry at the cool way in which Mr. Arnold applied his tests, and among them all none was more enraged than F. W. Newman. He could not endure the pitying but penetrating force of Arnold's criticism, or the imperturbable calm of his manner of stating it. Investive the good man might have borne with fortitude; but that this comparative stripling in Greek literature should assume toward such a veteran as himself the air of a superior being, was too much for his philosophy. He was angry and, what is more indiscreet, he showed that he was angry; and this gave his antagonist an opportunity to overwhelm him anew with his bland and sedate condescension. Other translators had their own wrongs to avenge, and an exciting controversy was the result, in which nobody kept his temper except the person who had caused the disturbance. In one of the chapters "On Translating Homer," Mr. Arnold quotes a passage from Goethe which must be new even to many scholars who pride themselves on their familiarity with the writings of the great German. "From Homer and Polygnotus," says Goethe, "I every day learn more and more clearly that in our life here above ground we have, properly speaking, to enact hell." That Matthew Arnold had learned the same lesson from Homer and Polygnotus must have been the settled conviction of most of the translators he offended.

But then the keen critic had laid himself open to criticism. He illustrated his own principles of translation by rendering into English hexameters a passage or two from the *Iliad*. His critics made themselves merry over his versions, or perversions, of the original. He watched warily for an opportunity to retort, and he found it in the preface to his "Essays in Criticism." Speaking of himself as a Professor, he modestly states that he is

shy of claiming the title because he shares it with so many quacks and jugglers, like Professor Pepper, Professor Anderson, and the like. He cannot, he says, compete, merely as Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, with such shining lights as these. "I," he adds, "have my humble place in a hierarchy, whose seat is on earth; and I serve under an illustrious Chancellor who translates Homer, and who calls his Professor's leaning toward hexameters 'a pestilent heresy.' Nevertheless, that cannot keep me from admiring the performance of my severe chief; I admire its freshness, its manliness, its simplicity; although, perhaps, if one looks for the charm of Homer, for his play of divine light, Professor Pepper must go on, I cannot." The cool insolence of this deadly thrust is incomparably good, considered as satire. The Earl of Derby had sneered at Arnold's hexameters, and had translated Homer. Arnold patronizes his chief by admitting the merits of his version; but he indicates, in a light, fleering way, that in translating the first of the great poets of the world he has made only one slight mistake, the mistake of leaving out all the poetry. The truth of the criticism only made it the more exasperating. The allusion to Professor Pepper at the end must have stung the arrogant Earl to the quick. At any rate, he was careful, we think, to indulge in no more flings at his Professor's hexameters.

But a more provoking form of Mr. Arnold's fine scorn of what shocks his fastidious taste or offends his cherished opinions is his habit of adopting a mode of attack which he disclaims as far as he is himself concerned, but which is most in vogue among those writers who sympathize with his adversary's method of conducting the warfare of words. Thus Charles Sumner never used profane language as a proper expression of his own angry feelings; but he had no objection to quoting the profanity of brother senators, whose passions had been aroused by his opposition to their opinions. Readers of Wordsworth, when they come upon the first portion of one of his humane maxims, must have wondered how he could escape falling into the fault he palpably condemned. The passage begins thus:

"He who feels contempt
For any living thing—"

How, the reader asks, can the poet avoid expressing something like contempt for the person who is supposed to experience

it? But Wordsworth glides over the difficulty with perfect ease, as is seen by his conclusion :

“He who feels contempt
For any living thing, *has faculties*
Which he has never used.”

In a similar way, though for a different and less humane purpose, Mr. Arnold expresses his dislike of the style of Mr. Kinglake, as shown in the latter's brilliant history of “The Invasion of the Crimea.” He calls it “the Corinthian style,” detests it utterly, as having “the glitter of the East with the hardness of the West”; and ends by quoting an unfavorable criticism of it by somebody whom he styles “a brother Corinthian,” and who had, it seems, declared that Mr. Kinglake combined “the passion for tinsel of a sensuous Jew, with the savage spleen of a dyspeptic Englishman.” But Mr. Arnold hastens to add: “I do not say this of Mr. Kinglake's style; I am very far from saying it. To say it, is to fall into just that hard, brassy, over-stretched style which Mr. Kinglake himself employs so far too much, and which I, for my part, reprobate. But when a brother Corinthian of Mr. Kinglake's says it, I feel what he means.” When Mr. Kinglake read this criticism, must he not have felt that the “brother Corinthian” who made the somewhat brutal assault on his manner of writing was far more merciful than the fastidious critic who quoted it?

It would be needless to select other passages from Mr. Arnold's books in proof that his taste is so refined that he finds little to commend in his contemporaries. Bishop Colenso is the favorite “Pontiff of the Philistines”; Macaulay is “the Apostle of the Philistines,” and his Roman Ballads “pinchbeck.” He is not daunted even by such despots as Ruskin and Carlyle, but draws a marked line of distinction between their genius and intelligence. Their deficiency in the latter quality seems to grieve him much. Thackeray and George Eliot he does not even mention; and of Dickens he said nothing good during the great romancer's life, and classed “Little Dorrit” among Magnall's Questions, Joyce's Scientific Dialogues, and Beecher's Sermons, in his catalogue of the library of an average British Philistine. After Dickens's death, for a purpose of his own, he quoted and praised those portions of “David Copperfield” which contained a satire on middle-class religion and middle-class education. It

was said of a lawyer, eminent for his learning and his ability, and the singular absence of passion in his arguments, that he could not speak fifteen minutes before a jury without running the risk of not only losing his case, but of making every man of the twelve his personal enemy. The secret of his unpopularity was that he spoke down to court and jury from an inaccessible height of wisdom which they could not hope to reach, but from which he, for the time, descended, in such a way as to give them the impression that he *condescended*. "Some men," said Mr. Choate, "we dislike for cause; others, peremptorily." He must have meant by the latter the men who condescend.

It is to be feared that we have apparently undervalued the real power and influence of Mr. Arnold in thus frankly stating certain defects and limitations in his character which have not been without their effect in giving an undue bias to his intellect. There is a class of educated readers in England and the United States who, not being writers, are delighted with criticisms which are really funeral services over the souls of would-be writers who fail to come up to ideal standards of excellence. How many men and women, who might eventually have become good writers, are killed at the start by harsh judgments it is hard to determine. Byron expresses his astonishment at the success of such critical homicides. He says,

"Strange that the soul, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an article."

But it is often snuffed out, to the great satisfaction of the class of readers we have referred to, who would probably meet a similar fate if they ventured to appear in print. Their discretion is rewarded by the tranquil enjoyment they experience in witnessing the death-bed agonies of their more ambitious friends and neighbors who, conquering the natural fear which the austere critics are so calculated to excite, have ignominiously fallen in their desperate attempt to rise. This class of readers, who have generally "gone through college" without having college go through them, are prone to pride themselves on their culture, and resent the most diffident criticisms regarding the perfection of their idol, Matthew Arnold, whom they look up to as the apostle of culture. Now, the importance of culture cannot be overstated; but, as has been pleasantly remarked, the maxim is in danger of being so perverted as to end practically "in the

culture of self-importance." This hateful perversion of the true creed is observable in the behavior of literary fops and coxcombs who imitate the master, as other fops and coxcombs vainly try to imitate, in the intercourse of society, the self-centered, refined insolence of manner and irreproachable costume of the acknowledged leaders of fashion. Mr. Arnold is as immeasurably beyond such affectations in literature as he is in dress. It seems cruel to make him in the least degree responsible for a shallow superciliousness of tone in polite literary circles, which a few sentences in his writings may still have had some influence in producing. His leading maxim is that "conduct," the cultivation of righteousness, properly occupies three-fourths of human life; "culture" is the remaining fraction; and he emphasizes this because he believes that it has been unduly disregarded, and is, moreover, absolutely necessary for the right regulation of conduct. What may be called his vital superciliousness is a quality which has its roots deep down in his intellectual and moral character, and though a serious defect, is entirely different from the sham substitute, which consists in despising what one cannot emulate, and in sneering at well-intended efforts for excellence which one has never had the nerve even to attempt.

If we examine carefully the earlier prose essays of Mr. Arnold, we shall find that his method of assailing English Philistinism was by a sudden, a violent change of the point of view in his way of looking at things specially repugnant to the English mind. In his dissertations on "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," and "The Literary Influence of Academies," he opened a lively campaign at everything insular and provincial in English habits of thought, and he showed no toleration for what he considered the brag and bluster of English political and literary conceit. He was necessarily one-sided; but he made narrowness an agent to promote comprehensiveness. Desiring to get the English mind "out of its ruts," he urged English thinkers to include in their confident generalizations a number of facts and ideas which they had hitherto excluded; and these neglected facts and ideas he exaggerated out of their true relations, in order to force them on public attention. He lacked, as we have said, the kindling, magnetic power which springs from original energy of nature; but he possessed, in a striking degree, the minor quality of suggestiveness. He had light in abundance, though he was wanting in the heat which ordinarily

accompanies light. His suggestiveness made him command the attention of many thinkers who, like Emerson, believe that the best benefit we receive from other minds is not so much instruction as "provocation."

In his essay on the "Function of Criticism," Mr. Arnold takes the ground that the critic, earnest to acquire the best that is thought and known in the world, and to see all things as they really are, should avoid direct contact with practical life, and decline to apply his advanced ideas to existing facts. Reformers naturally resented the principle thus confidently announced, because they knew, by experience, that it was impossible to prevent ideas from coming into conflict with current abuses in church and state. Thus M. Renan said, in substance, to the Emperor Napoleon the Third: "Allow us thinkers and scholars to think and investigate freely, and communicate the results of our thinking and research to the few other scholars who care for the things of the mind, and we will not interfere with our impertinent objections to anything you may do with the uneducated and prejudiced millions of France. We do not address them at all." Well, the eventual result was Renan's "Life of Jesus," which became such an element of disturbance in the whole Imperial system of government, that any alcove in a large public library might be packed full of books and pamphlets which this truly incendiary volume called forth from all classes of the French population, clerical and political. Mr. Arnold, as an Englishman, could not expect to rival M. Renan in creating a similar outburst of the public mind by such a volume as "St. Paul and Protestantism," or "Literature and Dogma"; but everything that could be done by the audacities of theological thinking, aimed directly at the cherished tenets of all English churches and sects that pretended to orthodoxy, was done by Mr. Arnold in these two heretical books. He fondly thought, like Renan, that he could keep at a distance from the smoke and dust of a combat that his own writings tended to provoke. Such men may flatter themselves that they are addressing thinkers alone, when they are really rousing mobs. One is reminded of the intelligent contraband who, during our civil war, entertained an audience in Dedham, Massachusetts, with an account of a furious conflict of Federals and Rebels on the banks of the Potomac. "But," asked a critical auditor of his flaming narrative, "where were you when the battle was raging?" "Oh! I

was back among the baggage." "But how far were you from the bullets and the cannon-balls?" "Well," was the instant reply, "not so far as Dedham!" Probably the critic was a thoughtful abolitionist, who, discontented with the avowed objects of the war, concluded to stay at home until Emancipation was proclaimed; but he doubtless was soon swept into the crowd of volunteers, conscripts, colonels, and brigadier-generals that reënforced the army of the Potomac. He had, like Renan and Arnold, intended to judge dispassionately of battles from a discreet and distant point of view, but was whirled into the midst of the contest by a fate he could not withstand.

The prose of Mr. Arnold, when he is in his best mood, almost realizes his ideal of what he calls the Attic style, having its "warm glow, blithe movement, and soft pliancy of life." Take such an essay as that on "Religious Sentiment," and it seems, as we read, that it cannot be improved. In some of his theological and political discussions his style, it must be confessed, loses much of its charm. It is important, however, to discriminate between listening to Mr. Arnold and reading him. It is well known that some of the ablest Englishmen scandalously neglect the elementary rules of elocution. In the United States almost every person, from the farmer who speaks in a town meeting to the accomplished orator who addresses the Senate of the country, considers that the second part of his sentence should be as audible as the first. As far as we have heard eminent English speakers who have addressed American audiences, we have been surprised at the difference between the effect produced by what they speak and the effect produced by what they write. In Mr. Arnold's case, we remember a singular illustration of this general fact. One of his masterpieces of compact criticism is certainly his lecture on Heine. An accomplished professor of literature in one of our best colleges heard it delivered at Oxford, and came home fully impressed with the belief that Mr. Arnold was an overrated man. When published, as an article in a magazine, it attracted the notice of Mr. Emerson, who was vehement in its praise, and asked every person he met why there were no such critics in America. Even Carlyle heard of it, and had to read it. He was, of course, enraged, for he was accused of mistaking the main current of German literature after Goethe. "Have you heard," he growled to an Ameri-

can friend, "of poor Matt Arnold? What creature do you think he has selected as the writer who has continued, since Goethe, the main current of German literature? Why, it is that *PIG*, Heine!"

In coming to the consideration of Mr. Arnold's theological writings, one is impressed, and sometimes oppressed, by his theological learning and his skill in coolly reversing all the standards of popular belief; but he has not the first qualification of a religious reformer on a large scale; for, though a keen and well-equipped critic of theological dogmas, he is not a man of religious genius. The exaltation of soul, the fervor, the rapture, the ecstasy, of those great natures who have vitally experienced new views of religion, and verified them by the facts of their own consciousness, are entirely absent from his cool statements of revolutionary opinions. Paul's Epistles are considered the bulwarks of orthodoxy; but Mr. Arnold attempts to prove that the doctrines derived from them are gross misinterpretations of the Apostle's meaning. In "Literature and Dogma," he defends the strange hypothesis that the God revealed in the Old Testament is not a personal God, but only the "Eternal, not ourselves, that [and not who] makes for righteousness." The almost endless succession of texts he quotes in order to sustain his view of Israel's God as an eternal *IT* is calculated to make Jew and Christian alike tired of the very name of Righteousness. The special point he makes is that the language of the Bible is "fluid, passing, and literary, not rigid, fixed, and scientific"; and this, the first step toward a right understanding of the Bible, demands culture in the person who takes it. By the application of this principle, he gives a new interpretation to the texts on which the doctrines of all orthodox churches and sects are based; and his interpretation, if accepted, demolishes the doctrines. As long ago as 1838 Mr. Emerson, in his celebrated address to the Cambridge divinity students, announced Mr. Arnold's leading idea with more condensed vigor, in speaking of the theological misinterpretations of the words of Jesus. "The idioms of his language," he said, "and the figures of his rhetoric, have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes." The remarkable thing to be noted in Mr. Arnold's work is the confidence he seems to have that his method of viewing the Bible will draw unbelievers, especially such unbelievers as find edification in Mr.

Bradlaugh's teachings, to a rational study of the Scriptures; but in fact, "Literature and Dogma" is a volume which believers, unbelievers, misbelievers, and make-believers would unite in neglecting or condemning. It might be supposed that the author would say a word to conciliate the Unitarians; but he seemed to dread contact with them, alluded to them only to warn them from the indulgence of any complacency they might feel in hoping that he was coming over to their side; forgetting that this denomination possessed, in James Martineau, one of the foremost theological scholars and thinkers of our day, and one who, in respect to mere "culture," had a right to be ranked among the best writers of the age. Thus excluding sympathy from all quarters, subtly insulting all liberals and illiberals in turn, Mr. Arnold's "Literature and Dogma," full of bright and penetrating thought as it is, and thronging with felicities of diction which make the ordinary rhetorician survey it with "admiring despair," ended in convincing only one person of the infallibility of its interpretation of the Bible. It is needless to add that the person thus convinced was the author. And this result might lead many crabbed orthodox divines to reverse his definition of God as the "Eternal, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness," so as to make it read: "The temporal, not ourselves, who makes for Matthew Arnold's revelation of the true meaning of the Scriptures."

If space permitted, we should like to enumerate some of the positive additions made by Mr. Arnold to the language of literary criticism. No writer of our generation has been more prolific in devising felicitous phrases, distinctions, and definitions, which have easily passed into circulation as representatives of facts in our intellectual and moral constitution, and which hardly lose their freshness and force even when he persistently repeats them in essay after essay. They embody in pointed expression the delicacy and the depth of his perceptions. They often have the fatal certainty of those insights which reward the steady gaze of a spiritual observer of spiritual facts. They are specially prominent in his literary papers, and one would readily exchange hundreds of pages which he has devoted to theology and politics for a series of articles which would include a more extended consideration of the men of genius incidentally referred to in his books, such as Sophocles, Plato, Dante, Lucretius, Montaigne, Bossuet, Voltaire, Goethe, Spenser, Keats, not to mention others.

In the present inadequate notice of him, we feel that we have been led unconsciously into placing too much emphasis on some of his peculiarities, which are calculated to provoke, if not to exasperate, many readers who are none the less charmed by the exquisite beauty of his style, by the graceful ease with which he commands at will all the resources of his large learning, by the inflexible honesty and independence of spirit which marks his partial and sometimes prejudiced judgments of men and things, and by the expansiveness, the fertility, the subtlety of his intellect, when his intellect has fair play, and is not controlled by obvious faults in his disposition and intellectual character.

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